

Mental health needs of the children of parents with mental illness

Reza Zeighami¹, Fatemeh Oskouie¹, Soodabeh Joolaee¹

¹Department of Psychiatric Nursing, Nursing and Midwifery College, Qazvin University of Medical Sciences, Qazvin, IR Iran

Abstract

Context: There is considerable empirical evidence about the psychosocial vulnerability of children of parents with mental illness (COPMI). Nonetheless, these children's experiences and needs have still known poorly.

Aims: This study was conducted to explore the mental health needs of COPMI.

Settings and Design: The grounded theory approach was deployed.

Material and Methods: Semi-structured interviews were held with 17 participants who had been recruited purposively and theoretically from a psychiatric teaching hospital located in Qazvin, Iran 2008–2010.

Statistical Analysis Used: The data were analyzed using Strauss and Corbin method (1998).

Results: After relating the main concepts of the study, the “COPMI need theory” was formulated. This theory explains children's needs, changes of needs in the cycle of parents' illness, the process of fulfilling the needs, and outcomes-driven from need fulfillment.

Conclusions: Based on findings, recommendations were provided to mental health professionals who for dealing with families and children of patients with mental disorders.

Keywords: Children, Family, Grounded theory, Mental disorder, Parents

Address for correspondence: Dr. Reza Zeighami, Department of Psychiatric Nursing, Nursing and Midwifery College, Qazvin University of Medical Sciences, Bahonar Avenue, Qazvin, IR Iran.
E-mail: behsare@gmail.com

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INTRODUCTION

The global prevalence of mental disorders has been reported to be 20 cases per every 100 people.^[1] It is estimated that in Australia, one of every five people experiences serious mental problems.^[2] Moreover, about half of American people experience some forms of mental disorders during their lives^[3] so much so that 40 million people are affected by mental illnesses each year.^[4] In Europe, mental disorders have been also estimated to affect about 27% of the total population.^[5] In general, it is estimated that 25% of the

global population suffer from mental problems.^[6] The prevalence of these disorders in Iran is also about 20% from which one percent of these patients need inpatient hospital care.^[7]

Statistics show that in the United States, one-third of male and two-third of female patients who suffer from mental disorders have children. Moreover, half of the people with mental health condition in England have children.^[8] Studies conducted in Iran have also revealed that 45.9% of female and 43.9% of male patients who are suffering from mental disorders have children.^[9] In general, 25%

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